

military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4097

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 4097 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4112

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4112 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4133

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4133 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4148

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4148 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4211

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4211 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4218

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4218 intended to be pro-

posed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 3166. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to improve coverage of dental and oral health services for adults under Medicaid, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a tremendous toll on our Nation. Healthcare workers have valiantly served our communities throughout the crisis. Still, we face unprecedented challenges, and this moment calls for historic action.

The pandemic laid bare the gaps in our healthcare system and magnified longstanding inequities. Health inequities have been eating away at our communities for many years, which is why I have fought for policies to reduce economic and social inequalities overall—in short, access to nutrition, education, and housing, and increased funding for social and mental health services.

Earlier this year, Congress enacted some of those reforms in the American Rescue Plan Act, which is bringing much-needed help to Marylanders and Americans across the country. It was a strong investment to complement ongoing efforts to curtail the rapid spread of the virus, particularly as we grapple with more contagious variants, such as the Delta variant. Now, we have the opportunity to enhance that effort through the Build Back Better Act.

Even with the significant investments in healthcare over the last year and a half, Americans are struggling to pay for their basic healthcare needs, like prescription medications and mental healthcare. Waiting lists for home- and community-based services so individuals can age in place with dignity are in the thousands or tens of thousands in States around the country. In my State of Maryland, over 30,000 seniors and individuals are waiting to get access to home- and community-based services.

Now, we have the opportunity to make prescription drugs more affordable, expand access to home- and community-based services, extend enhanced financial support to individuals in the individual market, and permanently fund the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP.

We have been working on these problems for years and, in some cases, for over a decade. Congress is long overdue in acting to remedy them.

As we make these historic investments, we must also redouble our ef-

forts to address the longstanding gaps in healthcare access. For instance, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make major reforms to the Medicare benefit.

Earlier this year, I reintroduced the Medicare Dental Benefit Act, which would add dental benefits to Medicare. It would help more than 56 million seniors and people with disabilities afford much-needed dental care.

According to the Wisdom Tooth Project of Oral Health America, nearly 70 percent of seniors lack or have limited access to dental insurance, and fewer than half have access to dental care each year. Those numbers are inexcusable. We should be working to strengthen and expand access to quality, affordable dental care for all Americans, regardless of age or income.

That is why, today, I am introducing, along with Senator STABENOW, the Medicaid Dental Benefit Act, which would extend comprehensive dental health benefits to tens of millions of low-income Americans.

Currently, States have flexibility to determine whether to provide dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. Although most States, including my State, provide at least emergency dental services for adults, fewer than half of the States provide comprehensive dental care.

The consequences of such haphazard access could not be clearer: higher costs and worse outcomes.

A recent report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found that Black, Hispanic, and low-income adults visited the emergency room for dental care at the highest rates of any group in 2018.

Many of you have heard me speak before of the tragic loss of Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Prince George's County resident, in 2007. Deamonte's death was particularly heartbreaking because it was entirely preventable. What started out as a toothache turned into a severe brain infection that could have been prevented by an \$80 extraction. After multiple surgeries and a lengthy hospital stay, Deamonte passed away nearly 15 years ago, just a few miles from this building.

It is imperative that we use this once-in-a-generation opportunity to increase access to dental care, which will improve the overall health of millions. To echo former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, "there is no health without oral health."

Adequate access to oral health is essential to preventing tragedies like the death of Deamonte Driver from ever happening again. Let us continue to build upon the progress made today in advancing access to oral health to protect individuals around the country.

As we work to pass this legislation, let us not lose sight of what is at stake. Just in the last few days, we have seen some of the best that American healthcare can provide, but also some of the worst.

Vaccines are making a critical difference in the fight against COVID-19, and just this Wednesday, they will be available to all ages 5 and older. It is a momentous achievement and a great relief to families and communities around the Nation.

At the same time, women in Texas are being denied access to reproductive healthcare while, on Monday, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on two cases challenging the Texas anti-abortion law S.B. 8. *Roe v. Wade* has been the established legal precedent in this country for more than half a century, but anti-choice activists continue to push policies like S.B. 8 that are sending this country and women's health and well-being in the wrong direction. Women and their healthcare should not be under constant threat. If we fail the women of America, we fail our Nation.

Right now, we have a choice on how we as a nation want to emerge from the pandemic. We can continue on the same course, leaving millions of families behind, or we can answer the call of the American people and invest in high-quality, equitable healthcare.

Let us answer the call.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 3177. A bill to restore protections for Social Security, Railroad retirement, and Black Lung benefits from administrative offset; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, Social Security provides vital benefits millions of Americans who work and pay into the system with each paycheck. Because Social Security is fundamental to workers' retirement security, the law protected benefits from creditors. The only exceptions were unpaid Federal taxes, child support or alimony payments, and court-ordered victim restitution. These protections ensured that the social safety net programs would be there for basic needs. That protection was weakened over 20 years ago when the law was changed. Now, more and more seniors face cuts in their Social Security benefits because of student loan debts. While Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration took significant steps to protect Americans from facing crushing debt during a global pandemic, exempting the economic impact payments from garnishment and extending the freeze on student loan payments through January 2022, seniors will still be on the hook for cosigning their child or grandchild's student loan debt when those payments resume. We need to take action today to restore the strong protections to Social Security and other benefit programs.

We now realize what a profound effect the loss of these protections has had on retirees and individuals with

disabilities, who often live on fixed incomes. More and more seniors and people with disabilities are having their Social Security and other lifeline benefits taken away to pay Federal debts. For example, according to recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Fiscal Service, over 167,000 Americans had their benefits garnished for student loan debt. While 167,000 seems small compared to a nation of over 320 million, those 167,000 had nearly \$200 million garnished from their earned benefits. This is just the tip of the iceberg as more Americans start receiving benefits. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of individuals whose Social Security benefits were offset to pay student loans debt increased by 133 percent, from about 72,000 to 169,000. Over that same period, the amount collected from Social Security benefits ballooned from almost \$63 million to nearly \$200 million, a 217-percent increase.

Social Security plays a critical role in keeping seniors and people with disabilities out of poverty. In Oregon alone, Social Security cuts the poverty rate of the elderly from about 35 percent to 5 percent. However, despite Social Security's critical role in the safety net, close to 1 out of every 10 seniors over age 65 and 1 in 5 disabled workers still live in poverty and that is simply unacceptable.

I, along with Senators BROWN, WHITEHOUSE, LEAHY, WARREN, HIRONO, SANDERS, PADILLA, VAN HOLLEN, and MURRAY am reintroducing the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act. The bill would restore the strong protections in the law that prevented the government from taking away earned benefits to pay Federal debts, and guarantee beneficiaries will be able to maintain a basic standard of living by receiving the benefits they have earned. The bill is supported by the Strengthen Social Security Coalition, Social Security Works, National Association of Disability Representatives, AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Government Employees, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives, Justice in Aging, American Federation of Teachers, Alliance for Retired Americans, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare.

I ask unanimous consent that the bill be printed in the RECORD following this statement.

S. 3177

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY, RAILROAD RETIREMENT, AND BLACK LUNG BENEFITS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET.

(a) PROHIBITION ON ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) ASSIGNMENT UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Section 207 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 407) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d) Subparagraphs (A), (C), and (D) of section 3716(c)(3) of title 31, United States Code, as such subparagraphs were in effect on the date before the date of enactment of the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act, shall be null and void and of no effect."

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 14(a) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 (45 U.S.C. 231m(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ". The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act."

(B) Section 2(e) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following: "The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act."

(b) REPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 3716(c) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking "(3)(A)(i) Notwithstanding" and all that follows through "any overpayment under such program);";

(B) by striking subparagraphs (C) and (D); and

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as paragraph (3).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (5) of such section is amended by striking "the Commissioner of Social Security and".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to any collection by administrative offset occurring on or after the date of enactment of this Act of a claim arising before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 3178. A bill to express the sense of Congress on interoperability with Taiwan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have my bill printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The bill expresses the sense of Congress on interoperability with Taiwan.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3178

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INTEROPERABILITY WITH TAIWAN.

It is the sense of Congress that, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8; 22 U.S.C. 3301 et seq.) and the Six Assurances, the United States should seek to support the goals of—

(1) improving asymmetric defense capabilities of Taiwan;

(2) bolstering deterrence to preserve peace, security, and stability across the Taiwan Strait; and

(3) deepening interoperability with Taiwan in defense capabilities, including in—

(A) maritime and air domain awareness; and

(B) integrated air and missile defense systems.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

S. 3179. A bill making appropriations for financial services and general government for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, which will help fund essential government programs that invest in the success of everyday Americans and help build a stronger, more resilient economy with greater opportunity and more shared prosperity for all.

As chair of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, I developed this bill with the help of Ranking Member CINDY HYDE-SMITH from Mississippi, and I want to begin by thanking her and the Appropriations Committee staff on both sides that have helped assemble this legislation. Putting together any one piece of the Federal budget is beyond the power of any one individual; it takes a dedicated team of public servants working shoulder-to-shoulder, day-in and day-out—and committed to delivering real results for the American people. I appreciate Senator HYDE-SMITH's partnership on our subcommittee, and I also want to thank Senator LEAHY and Ranking Member SHELBY for their leadership on the full committee.

And in addition to my colleagues and partners on Capitol Hill who have contributed to this legislation, our work has also been guided by the input of others, outside of the Senate, who have offered their testimony and insight. In order to craft this spending package, the Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee held public hearings with the Treasury Department and the IRS, a public hearing to help understand Postal Service delivery issues, and a public hearing to learn about the important role of Community Development banks in economically challenged communities. We were briefed by an array of agencies under the bill's jurisdictions and met with stakeholders who would be directly affected by key elements of this legislation, including residents from my home State of Maryland.

The result of those combined efforts can be seen in the substance of this year's Financial Services and General Government spending bill, which provides \$29.4 billion to bring critical services to the American people by funding a number of important Federal agencies and government bodies from the Treasury Department to the Small Business Administration to the Federal Judiciary to the D.C. courts—and much more. Today, I would like to share with the American people exactly what is in this bill and how they stand to benefit from the provisions within it.

First and foremost, this bill arms the IRS with the resources it needs to ramp up customer service. This bill includes \$13.6 billion for the IRS, an increase of \$1.6 billion over last year's

spending levels, and these funds will allow the IRS to bring taxpayer services into the 21st century by upgrading and replacing aging IRS infrastructure. For working families, that means improved service and shorter hold times when they call the IRS with questions.

That additional funding will also allow the IRS to go after those ultra-wealthy tax cheats who have avoided paying what they owe to the government. Now, let's be clear: Each year, millions of folks pay what they owe, fill out their tax forms, and send them in to the IRS honestly and on time, and they trust that others do the same. But we know that while most people pay what they are required to under the law, some do not. There is anywhere from \$500 billion to \$1 trillion in taxes each year that are owed but not paid, primarily by the wealthy. That is billions of dollars that are overdue under current law and which should be available to help fund everything from education to our national defense. Both my Republican and Democratic colleagues know that doing nothing and allowing this tax gap to grow on our watch just isn't right. It flies in the face of basic fairness. While everyday Americans have their taxes withheld and follow the law, we cannot allow the super wealthy to evade the system. Everyone needs to pay what they owe. By enhancing the agility of the IRS to crack down on individuals who sidestep their current tax responsibilities, we can raise more revenue without raising taxes by a single dime.

The investment in a robust IRS will deliver additional monies to invest in growing opportunity and wealth in all of our communities, including underserved communities. And that mission has taken on an added measure of urgency as our country continues to recover from the economic fallout of COVID-19. Our bill helps meet the full promise of that very mission by providing \$360 million for the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, a \$90 million increase from last year's spending levels. CDFIs are key vehicles for funding businesses and projects in economically underserved communities. My State of Maryland is proud to have 13 certified community-based lenders across our State that benefit directly from the CDFI fund L, and earlier this year, I chaired a subcommittee hearing that included testimony from a Maryland constituent and valued adviser, Mr. Joseph Haskins, Jr., who is the chairman of Harbor Bank in Baltimore, a certified CDFI that has helped create \$3 billion in economic development in the Baltimore community since its founding in 2001. And just last month, I convened a roundtable with Shelly Gross-Wade, the CEO of the only CDFI in Prince George's County, MD, to discuss how we can better support minority small businesses across the region. Community lenders support a wide range of local projects, including everything from bringing grocery stores to com-

munities with no healthy food alternatives to investing in low-income housing, and I am glad that we were able to include robust funding for CDFIs in this year's bill.

On top of that, this bill provides additional resources for communities and small businesses through \$1 billion for the Small Business Administration, so we can make sure businesses continue to recover from the pandemic—and can grow stronger into the future. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and this spending bill puts that notion front-and-center in our Federal budget. I am proud that this legislation also includes a \$53 million increase for Entrepreneurial Development Grants that will encourage entrepreneurs to build businesses and create good-paying jobs—including entrepreneurs from historically underserved communities.

Money that goes to the SBA will also help make sure our small businesses have the support they need to get back on their feet in the wake of devastating natural disasters, which we all know have been on the rise due to the growing and very real consequences of climate change, an issue that demands this government's full and undivided attention. Extreme weather events get worse and worse each year, and my State of Maryland is feeling the pain of that trend right now in the aftermath of Tropical Depression Ida. I am glad that the Small Business Administration approved Maryland's request for a Disaster Declaration for those impacted by Ida, which has unlocked additional low-interest loans for businesses and homeowners in affected communities and emphasizes how just important the SBA is in helping our fellow citizens endure the impacts of climate change.

But if we want to tackle the climate crisis head-on, it isn't enough for us to support those who have already been harmed by the devastating effects of global warming; we also need to cut emissions. That is why this bill invests \$200 million in transitioning the Federal fleet to zero-emission vehicles. There are currently around 655,000 gas-powered vehicles in the federal fleet that spew more than 7 billion pounds of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere each year. With this bill, that will change. We need to take an all-of-government approach to tackling the climate crisis, and this provision within our legislation helps us do just that.

And as we invest in the health of our planet, we also need to invest in the health of our democracy and I am glad that this bill is a big win for increased campaign finance transparency in two major ways. First, this legislation drops a long-standing rider that blocked the SEC from requiring public companies to share their political spending with shareholders. Shareholders and the public have a right to know what political causes their money is being used to support, decisions that can go against their values

or put their investments at risk. Our legislation will enable the SEC to shine a light on that secret spending. And second, the bill drops a longstanding rider that blocked the Treasury from clarifying the definition of “political activity” for 501(c)(4) social welfare group, which are major sources of secret election spending.

More transparency in political fundraising is part of the essential mission to restore faith in government. Toward that same end, this bill also mandates greater transparency in how the Office of Management and Budget manages apportionments, which is the process of spending the money that Congress appropriates. And additionally, this bill works to ensure that our government represents the full diversity of the United States by expanding opportunities for DREAMers so that DACA recipients can be employed by the Federal Government. DREAMers should be able to bring their skills, talents, and unique perspectives to government jobs, where decisions affecting their communities are made every day, and our legislation allows them to participate fully in public service. This legislation also includes an increase in funding to the White House that would allow for paid internships, and I urge the President to use these funds to offer the opportunity to enter Federal service to more young people.

But while we work to recruit more of our fellow Americans to serve, we also need to ensure that those who are currently serving can work in offices that meet their full needs. That is why I am particularly pleased to include language in this bill urging the General Service Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to move forward on the proposed new, consolidated FBI headquarter, a process that was abruptly halted by the last administration. The FBI currently works in a crumbling building that fails to meet its operational and security needs, and it is time to move forward on the process of securing a new campus. I would be remiss if I did not note that Maryland, which is already home to many FBI employees, has two fully vetted sites in this process. I am committed to getting this new campus, which is over a decade in the making, finally completed to meet the needs of the FBI’s mission.

And in addition to strengthening the core planks of government by expanding transparency, helping grow pathways to service, and upgrading Federal buildings, the Financial Services and General Government bill also strengthens the government’s ability to take on pressing crises facing our communities, including our Nation’s ongoing challenges with addiction. It provides a 9-percent increase in funding for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, including resources for the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program and the Drug-Free Communities program, which helps prevent drug addiction among our Nation’s youth. Sub-

stance use disorders continue to tear at the fabric of our communities, including in my home State of Maryland, and this vital funding is essential both to stopping illegal drug trafficking and to healing my State and States across the country that have been plagued by addiction.

Finally, I would also like to note that this bill ends harmful riders that have interfered with the District of Columbia’s ability to spend its own taxpayer dollars, an example of Congressional meddling in local affairs that no Senator would tolerate toward their own State. And this bill includes \$760 million in special Federal payments for over a dozen distinct purposes relating to DC, including \$40 million for the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program to expand higher education choices for students of the District. And at a time when we see attacks on a women’s right to choose across this country, I am proud to say this bill ends years of restrictions to abortion care by dropping a rider that prohibited the District of Columbia—and Federal health insurance systems—from providing coverage for abortion services. This is sound policy that the majority of Americans support, and this provision is essential to protecting reproductive freedoms in this country.

In short, this legislation enhances services that help everyday people, builds more economic opportunity, uplifts working families, delivers support directly to our communities, fights climate change, strengthens our democracy, accelerates our work to modernize the IRS, and does much, much more, and we must get it to the President’s desk.

While I wish we could consider this bill under regular order, have a conference with the House and sign it into law, we are quickly running out of time. It is imperative that we enact this spending bill and the other 11 appropriations bills by December 3 when the current continuing resolution runs out to avoid a government shutdown, and in order to meet that deadline, we will likely be negotiating an omnibus. I look forward to working with Ranking Member HYDE-SMITH and our House colleagues to move this process forward immediately because we have no time to waste. So let’s now push ahead with our work, finish these bills, and do the job the American people sent us here to do.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 3183. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a program of the Department of Defense to carry out stormwater management projects on or related to military installations to improve the resilience of military installations and defense access roads and protect waterways and stormwater-stressed ecosystems; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, today I am introducing a bill to improve

stormwater management practices at Department of Defense, DOD installations across the country.

Climate related impacts, such as increased rainfall intensity and sea level rise, exacerbate the problem of stormwater runoff. Excess stormwater can threaten our military readiness and pollute surrounding waterways and ecosystems.

This phenomenon is acutely present in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, where DOD is the second largest Federal landholder, and stormwater is the only pollutant in the watershed that continues to increase. Therefore, it is imperative that the DOD, as an official partner to the Chesapeake Bay Program, do all that it can to support reduction in pollution runoff consistent with the State-based watershed implementation plans required by the Environmental Protection Agency. Climate change has put numerous Virginia and Maryland military bases at increased risk of flooding, including Naval Station Norfolk, Naval Air Station Oceana, Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads, Langley Air Force Base, Naval Support Activity Annapolis, Naval Support Activity Bethesda, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Joint Base Andrews, and Naval Support Activity South Potomac.

While there are 137 DOD installations, sites, and facilities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, this proposal will help ensure stormwater and natural resources beat management practices are constructed, maintained, and repaired at DOD facilities across the Nation.

The Federal Government provides State and local governments with billions in financial assistance each year to invest in stormwater infrastructure through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Very limited funding exists for the financing of stormwater infrastructure on military installations. The EMBRACE Act would make stormwater management projects eligible for Federal funding under either military construction projects, military installation resilience projects, unspecified minor military construction projects, defense access roads projects, the Defense Community Infrastructure Program DCIP, and the Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program ERCIP.

The bill instructs the Defense Department to give priority to projects that retrofit buildings and grounds on bases and improve access roads prone to flooding. It backs the building of stormwater ponds and other retention strategies. It also supports replacing impermeable paving with materials that let water seep into the soil rather than run off. Projects such as rain gardens, cisterns, and planters also would be eligible for funds.

I am proud to be joined in this effort by Senators WARNER, CARDIN, and VAN HOLLEN. The bill has also been endorsed by critical partners such as the Chesapeake Bay Commission, the

Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Chesapeake Conservancy, Choose Clean Water Coalition, American Flood Coalition Action, the Nature Conservancy, Southern Environmental Law Center, and Wetlands Watch. I was glad to see that Representative BOBBY SCOTT successful in including his bipartisan companion EMRBACE Act as an amendment to the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act NDAA for fiscal year 2022. It is my hope that this legislation will be included in the NDAA upon its final passage in Congress.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 3203. A bill to establish the Commission on the COVID-19 Pandemic; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of my bipartisan bill, the National Commission on the COVID-19 Pandemic Act. This bill would establish a 9/11-style Commission to conduct an investigation on the COVID-19 outbreak and identify lessons learned regarding preparedness, response, and recovery. I would like to thank my cosponsors, Senators MARSHALL, GILLIBRAND, and ERNST, for joining me in introducing this crucial bill.

Like we did after the devastating September 11 terrorist attacks, our bill would establish a bipartisan Commission on the COVID-19 pandemic to better understand the vulnerabilities it has revealed in our national security and healthcare system and improve our preparedness for future crises.

It is crucial to improve our understanding of pandemic threats and health issues that the United States could face in the coming decades to better protect our population and mitigate the risk of a similar human and economic catastrophe in the future.

To date, COVID-19 has caused more than 750,000 deaths in the United States and infected at least 46 million people.

Beyond the devastating toll it has taken on human lives, the pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in our preparedness for dealing with such a deadly virus.

At the beginning of the U.S. outbreak, hospitals struggled to secure enough personal protective equipment to keep health workers safe. As the pandemic worsened, we saw additional shortages in critical medical equipment like ventilators and other medical products that save lives, including testing supplies.

As we waited for effective treatments and vaccines to be developed and approved, testing and mask wearing supplemented with physical distancing and other nonpharmaceutical tools were our only weapons combating the spread of the virus. However, we knew these tactics alone wouldn't ultimately defeat the virus.

After unprecedented scientific collaboration and innovation, we now fi-

nally have three FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines that are safe, effective, and free for all Americans. While getting as many people vaccinated as possible remains the only path out of the pandemic, barriers to access and misunderstanding about the safety of the vaccines have delayed too many Americans from getting their vaccine.

Disturbingly, throughout the pandemic, we have seen an increase in hate crimes against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community due to racially discriminatory language related to COVID-19. Possible underreporting means this problem may be even more prevalent than we know.

Finally, after examining all available intelligence reporting and information, the intelligence community remains divided on the most likely origin of COVID-19. According to the latest declassified assessment on COVID-19 origins, more information is needed to provide a more definitive explanation of how the virus emerged.

The Commission that would be established by our bipartisan bill would conduct a comprehensive investigation of our government's preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic and make recommendations on how we can be better prepared in the future.

Modeled after the 9/11 Commission, this investigative body would complement other oversight efforts in Congress and the administration.

The Commission would be composed of 10 members who aren't current Federal officials, with the same partisan balance as the 9/11 Commissioners and with a variety of backgrounds in relevant fields, including public health, epidemiology, emergency preparedness, medical intelligence, and others; provide a full accounting to the President, Congress, and the American people of the facts and circumstances related to the outbreak in the United States as well as abroad, including our preparedness, the intelligence and information we had available before the virus reached the United States, and how Federal, State, and local governments, as well as the private sector, responded to the crisis; and gather information and hold hearings to eventually publish public reports on the Commission's findings and recommendations.

The global COVID-19 pandemic showed just how unprepared we were to respond to a major public health threat that has continued for almost 2 years. This lack of readiness caused widespread shutdowns of society in the United States and across the globe, resulting in a number of preventable deaths too high to comprehend.

As we mourn those we lost, we must acknowledge that this pandemic is still not over and the threat of a new virus emerging that has greater pandemic potential looms. This Commission will ensure we learn from our achievements as well as our tragedies during this modern plague so that it may never happen again.

I want to thank the Infectious Diseases Society of America for their sup-

port of our bill, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass it.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 440—RECOGNIZING NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AND CELEBRATING THE HERITAGES AND CULTURES OF NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. TESTER, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 440

Whereas, from November 1, 2021, through November 30, 2021, the United States celebrates National Native American Heritage Month;

Whereas National Native American Heritage Month is an opportunity to consider and recognize the contributions of Native Americans to the history of the United States;

Whereas Native Americans are descendants of the original, Indigenous inhabitants of what is now the United States;

Whereas the Bureau of the Census estimates that—

(1) in 2020, there were 9,666,058 individuals of American Indian and Alaska Native descent in the United States; and

(2) in 2019, there were 607,010 individuals of Native Hawaiian descent in the United States;

Whereas Native Americans maintain vibrant cultures and traditions and hold a deeply rooted sense of community;

Whereas Native Americans have moving stories of tragedy, triumph, and perseverance that need to be shared with future generations;

Whereas Native Americans speak and preserve Indigenous languages, which have contributed to the English language by being used as names of individuals and locations throughout the United States;

Whereas Congress has consistently reaffirmed support for Tribal self-governance and self-determination policies for Native American communities and the commitment of the United States to improving the lives of all Native Americans by—

(1) enhancing health care and law enforcement resources; and

(2) improving the housing and socioeconomic status of Native Americans;

Whereas the United States is committed to strengthening the government-to-government relationship that the United States has maintained with the various Indian Tribes;

Whereas Congress has recognized the contributions of the Iroquois Confederacy and the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on the Founding Fathers in the drafting of the Constitution of the United States with the concepts of—

(1) freedom of speech;

(2) the separation of governmental powers; and

(3) the system of checks and balances between the branches of government;